

MENTAL NOTES

A mind expanding e-newsletter from Mark Zust, *The Perceptionist*



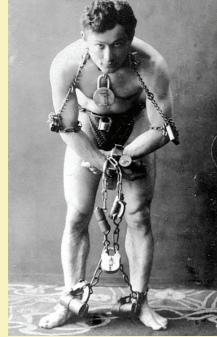
Who-dini? You-dini!

December, 2008

“My mind is the key that sets me free.” Harry Houdini

Harry Houdini. Who doesn't know the name? His daring escapes, his legendary stamina, his amazing resourcefulness coupled with his uncanny gift for self-promotion, have secured his name among the icons of the 20th century. Much more than a performer, Harry was an explorer, inventor, researcher and savvy businessman who almost single-handedly created the field of “escapology” by freeing himself from locks, shackles, jail cells and all forms of bizarre restraints including a packing crate which was nailed shut and thrown into a frigid river, a metal can filled with milk, and even a giant beer stein. Harry also created “ghost-busting,” the search for apparitions and the exposing of phony “mediums” or psychics who preyed on wealthy, bereaved patrons reeling from the horrors of World War I.

Harry's real name was Ehrich Weiss. He was a Hungarian



immigrant who spoke little English, had few skills, and was just 5 foot, two inches tall. What he had in large supply was a deep love for his family and his adopted country, along with a steely resolve to conquer any challenge. Today, America faces challenges not witnessed since the Depression. Every day I speak with a neighbor, a business owner, or a family member and I hear desperation in their voices and see fear in their eyes. Houdini's greatest accomplishment was conquering his fears and embracing opportunity wherever he found it. We can

do the same. Enjoy this holiday season and take the time to reflect on our many blessings as a nation. What can Harry Houdini teach us as we look to the future? To free our minds of constricting beliefs, fears and negative self-talk. **Cheers to an amazing 2009, filled with worthy challenges and unlimited opportunities!**

Lessons from the remarkable life of Houdini:

- 1. Believe in Yourself.** Only then will others truly believe in you and embrace your gifts.
- 2. Recreate Yourself.** Use your talents and channel your singular combination of abilities to create a new service, product, or unique way of seeing the world to solve problems at work and home.
- 3. Promote Yourself.** Your accomplishments can only be leveraged if the world knows about them. Be humble, but don't be invisible!
- 4. Be resourceful.** Read voraciously, become an expert, then apply your knowledge to solve tough challenges and open up new avenues for advancement.
- 5. Set lofty goals.** Even if you don't achieve every goal, your extra efforts open new doors and help you grow in areas you never thought possible.
- 6. Learn from your mistakes.** Houdini had an encyclopedic knowledge of locks and kept a diary of all his escapes – what worked, what didn't, and what he would do the next time he found himself in a similar predicament. Do you have a success diary?
- 7. Anticipate and embrace change.** Harry saw that vaudeville wasn't the future, so he made movies, presented lectures, wrote books and created the field of ghost-busting.
- 8. Think differently to solve problems.** Use your past experience and apply it in a completely new way to find unexpected approaches and possibly reveal entirely new opportunities, product ideas, inventions, even entire schools of thought!
- 9. Look for new combinations.** Harry turned an interest in magic and athletics into “escapology” and helped define entertainment in the early 20th century.
- 10. Free your mind.** Houdini loved to explore and try new things. He was the first man to fly solo in Australia, not long after the Wright Brother's accomplishments at Kitty Hawk. Try meditation or yoga, browse through the library and check out a book at random and read it. Listen to different types of music on the radio or at home. Go to a new restaurant this month. New experiences stimulate your brain, stretch your mind and keep life interesting!

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